



## Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)

**Committee Name:** Judiciary

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Good afternoon, Madam Chair Bartlett and Members of the Committee.

My name is Neka Duckett-Randolph, and I am the resident environmentalist at Out For Justice, a member-based grassroots organization dedicated to engaging, educating, and empowering communities to build power to dismantle harmful systems of oppression.

I want to speak today about **equity** – specifically, *who bears the burdens of climate pollution in Maryland and who benefits from polluters avoiding accountability.*

Right now, the costs of pollution fall hardest on communities that are already overburdened and underserved. In Baltimore's Infamous Black Butterfly, decades of intentional environmental degradation and disinvestment have left Black neighborhoods exposed to *multiple intersecting health risks* – from asthma and heat stress to legacy lead exposure, blight, and flooding.

Even as childhood lead poisoning has declined due to strong prevention laws, lead hazards remain a serious concern in older housing stock, with no amount of lead being safe for children and contributing to lifelong health and public safety concerns.

Baltimore also experiences some of the worst asthma hospitalization rates in the nation, with elevated rates tied to air pollution and climate-linked factors like heat and precipitation that exacerbate respiratory conditions.

Extreme weather events are no longer rare: **flooding and nuisance tide events are increasing**, threatening public safety, damaging infrastructure, and imposing costs on families and local governments that had no role in causing climate change.

These harms – to *health, safety, housing, and economic stability* – are not evenly distributed. They disproportionately affect Black Marylanders, low-income residents, children, and older adults who lack the resources to recover on their own. That is fundamentally inequitable.

**SB 432 helps correct that imbalance.** It gives the Attorney General the authority to pursue actions against entities whose misconduct has contributed to climate pollution and



establishes a Climate Crimes Accountability Fund so that the costs of *climate damage are borne by the polluters, not the people least able to afford them.*

Equity means not just acknowledging harm but *ensuring justice.* This bill shifts responsibility back to those who profited from pollution and away from the families and communities who have endured its consequences.

For these reasons, Out For Justice urges a *favorable report* on SB 432.